

Slough Schools Forum- Meeting held on Wednesday, 26th February, 2014

Present: Maggie Waller, Holy Family Primary School (Chair)
John Constable, Langley Grammar (Vice-Chair)
Louise Lund, Barney Bees Day Nursery
Debbie Richards, Arbour Vale School
Kathleen Higgins, Beechwood Secondary School
Gillian Coffey, Lynch Hill Primary School
Paul McAteer, Slough and Eton C of E Business and Enterprise College
Jon Reekie, James Elliman Primary School
Mary Sparrow, Wexham Secondary School
Maggie Stacey, St Anthony's RC Primary School
Jo Rockall, Herschel Grammar School
Jean Cameron, Slough Children's Centres
Nicky Willis, Cippenham Primary School
Hardip Singh, Khalsa Primary School

Observers: None

Attendees Kathleen Higgins, Tony Smith (Cambridge Education), Robin Crofts (Cambridge Education), Mike Hartley (Cippenham Primary School)

Officers: Atul Lad and Rajpreet Johal (Clerk)

Apologies: Paul Adams, Helen Huntley, Virginia Barrett, Lynda Bussley, Philip Gregory and Navroop Mehat

PART I

301. Welcome and Apologies

Philip Gregory, Navroop Mehat, Helen Huntley, Paul Adams, Virginia Barrett, Lynda Bussley

302. Declarations of Interest

None

303. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

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Robin Crofts reported there has been no decision made on who will represent the Local Authority at Schools Forum.

Robin Crofts noted Jackie Wright was requested to send the key contact details for the Local Authority . Jackie has now left the authority and the Forum confirmed this has not been received. Robin to speak to Chris Aston to arrange for these key contacts to be distributed.

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Paragraph 3, comment from Navroop to be amended to read: 'Navroop Mehat made reference to Primary Headteachers' concerns'.

Atul Lad confirmed the model with the financial implications was circulated to Forum members.

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Growth Fund; Maggie Waller reported that two letters were received from Primary Head colleagues regarding concerns voiced at Schools Forum. Maggie Waller agreed to circulate both letters to Forum members along with her responses. Maggie asked if there are any outstanding questions. Nicky Willis advised there is a Primary Headteachers' meeting where any outstanding questions will be discussed.

Maggie Waller will write to the Department for Education to raise the issue of the impact of no funding being provided to support these expansions. Maggie asked for evidence from the primary schools to support this. Nicky Willis to provide Maggie with a paragraph to be inserted in the letter. Atul Lad to provide Maggie with information on schools not able to be funded in 2013/14.

It was confirmed that around £100,000 remained in the Growth Fund for 2013/14.

Atul Lad confirmed that any allocation from the Growth Fund is made within the agreed criteria and any proposal to allocate outside the criteria would be brought to Schools Forum.

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Centrally retained items were agreed by the Forum in December 2013 and January 2014 and these decisions have been included in the key decisions log.

Maggie Waller noted it had been agreed to seek clarification regarding PFI from the Local Authority. It remains unclear what the overall position is regarding the PFI Council funding of over £800,000 as only the High Needs Block element of this has been brought to the attention of the Schools Forum at this stage (January meeting) and the remaining element (in excess of £500,000) has not been clarified for 2013/2014 or 2014/15. The Chief Executive has confirmed that a report regarding PFI will come to the March Schools Forum meeting.

Key Decisions Log

Early Years Block – line 153 to be amended to take out 'new'.

Membership

Maggie Waller reported we are waiting for January census figures to know if the balance on the group is right and then a review of membership will be done and brought to Schools Forum in March.

Academy Proprietors: Maggie reported there are still responses to be received from academies regarding the contact details for the purpose of election of academy members. Rajpreet Johal sent out a reminder email with a new deadline of 7th March. It was confirmed that the Academy Proprietor should be a Trust member and

if there is a vacancy for an academy member on this Forum it would be the proprietors that would elect the member.

Mary Sparrow noted the importance of maintaining headteacher representation on the Forum.

There was discussion about the importance of raising Governors' awareness about Schools Forum and Jon Reekie suggested that someone from the Forum could attend the next Governors' Conference. Maggie Waller offered to do this. Jon agreed to follow this up.

304. Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring 2013-14

Atul Lad presented the report to inform the Schools Forum of 2013-14 forecasted school revenue balances as at the end of Quarter 3. The information provided to the Forum is based on schools' returns for the end of the 3rd quarter, from April to December. Atul confirmed this is only for maintained schools.

It was noted that 13 schools are projecting to end the year with balances above the balance control mechanism thresholds of 8% (primary schools) and 5% (secondary schools).

Summary of issues noted in the returns are staffing and the difficulties in finding adequate replacements, capital works being delayed, new grants for teacher training and adjustments in nursery budgets.

Atul Lad to follow up any schools on Appendix 1 table showing particularly high and low figures e.g. going into double figures. The headteacher can be invited to attend Schools Forum if there is to be discussion about their particular school.

John Constable noted it would be useful to have an update on St Joseph's given the Forum's previous commitments to support the school.

305. 2014-15 Budget Process Update

Atul Lad presented the report to inform the Schools Forum of the current position regarding the 2014-15 school budgets.

Atul noted that the budget proforma including unit values was submitted to the DfE. Maintained schools should have received their allocations and academies should receive theirs through the EFA.

The final part of the process is Early Years and Special Needs.

It was noted in 5.1 of the report that the formula agreed by the Forum was ratified by the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Education.

306. Cambridge Education

Robin Crofts provided a verbal update:

Robin noted that Cambridge Education is going through a review process relating to Raising Achievement, SEN and services for pupils with AEN, Access, Services to Schools, Early Years and Children's Centres and Business Support.

Robin reported the review has taken place over the last few months and moved to a position where Cambridge Education has generated initial recommendations and they are supported in principle by the Local Authority, and are now into the next phase of sharing with team members.

Robin reported it has been discussed at SSEF and the intention is that it would be useful to set up a small group to focus on areas of the recommendations from the review and invite headteachers and stakeholders to discuss in more detail.

Process of review:

- Sharing with teams
 - Set up stakeholder groups
 - Refine the recommendations and take back to Local Authority in April / May
 - If any big issues arise it will need to go to Cabinet at the beginning of July
- Initial implementation May to September.

Overarching issues:

- A more holistic approach to service delivery
- For services to be better integrated internally, particularly with social care around early help.
- Re-shaping of services
- Improving quality, efficiency and effectiveness
- Developing and expanding traded services

Maggie Stacey noted it was difficult for schools to budget when costs are unknown, and to assist with accountability it was important to have up to date service level agreements (SLAs) in place. Robin reported they are not looking at fundamental changes but refinement of services. He noted that SLAs could be circulated in draft form to provide earlier information.

Nicky Willis requested clarity about what is statutory and what is non-statutory and what is available for maintained schools and for academies. Robin Crofts confirmed that updated SLAs will include this detail.

Tony Smith confirmed that the LA is continuing to retain the SEN statutory elements.

Robin Crofts referred to slides that were shared with the Local Authority. Robin to share these slides with the Forum after going through steps with staff internally.

307. Academies Update

Robin Crofts reported the information has not changed significantly since the last meeting.

9-10 additional schools are likely to be moving to Academy status over the next year.

Western House is moving into the Park Trust on the proposed date of 1st June.

308. 2013-14 Work Programme and Key Decisions Log

Noted.

309. Any Other Business

Nicky Willis asked for clarification of how the Growth Fund is allocated and Atul Lad confirmed that schools will receive it as part of the budget.

(Note: The Meeting opened at 8.15 am and closed at 9.15 am)